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# HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE MAELSTROM OF HEGEMONY OF THE SO-CALLED TRANSITION: PERFORMATIVITY OF THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL TODAY[1]

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This article deals with several problem areas concerning structural issues related to the contemporary social position of the humanities and social sciences, the nature of today's hegemony and present articulations of critical thinking. The primary focus is on the problems of the higher education system resulting from the Bologna process and the social role and importance of the figure of the public intellectual today, whereas the secondary focus is on connecting these issues with the characteristics of today's hegemony and the so-called transition. The text argues that the public intellectual should be considered and analyzed as a performative figure belonging to each period articulating and presenting public intellectual narratives, in other words, it is claimed that the public intellectual echoes the period itself as one of its mirror reflections.

Keywords: the Bologna reform of higher education, hegemony, the so-called transition, the public intellectual

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The main topic of this article mentioned in the title – the disputed aspects of the relationships between the humanities and social sciences, the hegemony of transition and the figure of the public intellectual – requires starting with common issues relating to the status of the humanities and social sciences today. More specifically, we will begin with a short critical overview of the influence of the Bologna process on education within the liberal capitalist system – given that we claim that the "Bologna reform" significantly contributes to the degradation of the humanities and social sciences – and we will continue with a discussion of issues regarding the nature of hegemony today, i.e. what we might, from today's socio-historical point of view, refer to as the so-called transition, emphasizing its role within the so-called post-Yugoslav areas. In the second part of the paper, the resulting systemic perspective will be applied to the figure and fate of the public intellectual, his/her place, role and significance in today's world. The performative figure of the public intellectual will be examined from two points of view. Firstly, the public intellectual as an archetypal, nearly trademark-like voice of the humanities and social sciences in the classical sense of the word. Secondly, the social place of the public intellectual as a reflection of the dominant political, economic and cultural contexts of the period in which we live.

## THE BOLOGNA HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM, HEGEMONY, THE SO-CALLED TRANSITION

Let us start with a reminder of some well-known general characteristics of the Bologna declaration. It was signed by ministers of education of the European countries in June 1999, initiating comprehensive reform of the higher education system in Europe. The core principles and values of the Bologna process espoused in the Declaration include: establishing a comparable system of studying and evaluating achievements (ECTS credits), improvement of European participation in higher education quality assurance, increase in competitiveness and cooperation, greater student and teacher mobility and the like. Croatia signed the Declaration in 2001, and the Bologna process has been implemented in the past ten or so years. However, the true nature and effects of these reforms would soon become apparent. In short, it turned out that this was a sort of an "Americanization" of traditional European educational and scientific models, an abandonment of the "idea of the university" from the European educational tradition built on the Enlightenment heritage (for more on this see Kant, Schelling and Nietzsche 1991), and a way of pandering to the market and capitalist logic so as to maintain European competitiveness on the global scale.

The practice soon shaped the dominant social trends in education and science. We are witnessing the ascendancy of the application and project logic of the so-called applied knowledge at the expense of fundamental theoretical insights, constant pushing for a close connection between education, science, the economy and business, the commercialization and commodification of education (as seen from increasing scholar-

ships, advanced privatization processes in the higher education and the like), and a rapid decrease in the general level of knowledge acquired through education (for critical reviews of the Bologna reform see Hromadžić 2008a; Hromadžić 2008b). What is at work, in effect, is what Konrad Liessmann, following the line of thought from Humboldt through Adorno's "theory of half-education", called "the theory of non-education", criticizing the conceptual ideologeme of "the society of knowledge". Liessmann states that the society of knowledge, despite its smug title, "is by no means a particularly smart society" (2008: 23). This society of knowledge is not characterized by classical values of knowledge or wisdom acquired through mental effort, genealogically woven into the tradition which started with classical philosophy through modernist insights to contemporary critical theories of society; rather it is a mere spectacle-like reenactment of a media-and-market-constructed reality, with an abundance of actively involved extras that feed its matrix (for a criticism of the ideology of the society of knowledge see Hromadžić 2015a). The nature of this process, of course, has a clear business rationale within the framework of what, in the spirit of the contemporary Italian neo-Marxist criticism of political economy, can be called cognitive capitalism, as done by e.g. Carlo Vercellone (2007: 29–42), or an economy based on the exploitation of knowledge in the era of post-Fordism, as a relatively new form of appropriation, accumulation and profit perpetuation of capital.

The question that intrigues us in this process is the current position of the humanities and social sciences. The Bologna process, in addition to the ambitions of promoting the acquisition of innovative business and managerial competencies, declares and prescribes the promotion of Enlightenment heritage elements such as the critical spirit, which has a very similar profile to that from the era of Yugoslav socialism (as reflected in the adage: "Comrades, we must learn from our own mistakes.") but, of course, with the opposite ideological agenda. Still, its purpose is not the change the dominant ideological matrix and the course of the liberal democratic capitalism – this hegemony machine that is disintegrating as a model before our very eyes[2] – towards developmentally-dialectic principles of critically-based thinking.[3]

In contrast to the declarative rhetoric of liberal capitalist hegemony of our time, knowledge and education in the so-called Bologna process are characterized by, among other things, anti-Enlightenment elements. For instance, the *Deklaracija o znanosti i visokom obrazovanju* (Declaration on science and higher education) drawn up in 2012 by the

[2] The closest examples of this can be seen in Hungary, Poland and Croatia, where, with some differences, trends that certain analysts and publicists refer to as neoliberal democracy, liberal non-democracy and antiliberal nationalism are at work. These terms refer to social phenomena which are the result of putting together neoconservativism (with relation to identity and ideology), quite radical political rightist parties in power, and the technocratic-neoliberal model in the sphere of economics.

[3] Perhaps a more recent example from Japan can be indicative of the place, role, importance and perspective the humanities have in such a social world. On 8 June 2015, all deans of national universities in Japan received a notification from the Ministry of Education to either abolish the humanities and social sciences or to somehow reformulate them as "more utilitarian" sciences. This directive is part of a new plan of the Japanese government for a totalitarian (or total) turn to sciences that are "more utilitarian" (more on this in Kovačić 2015).

Akademska solidarnost (Academic solidarity) union is clearly marked by a Humboldtian vision of what education could and should be, and cautions about the social processes of economic reductionism, the need to establish an education for society and not for the market, the equality of all scientific areas, education and science as a public good, and free and inclusive higher education. We are also seeing indicative, and certainly desirable, investments in the refurbishment of schools, faculties, libraries, in equipment, buying expensive software licenses, but we are simultaneously seeing continual degradation of working conditions in these same schools, faculties and libraries. This casualization of the profession should be analytically examined from the wider perspective of social and class issues that significantly determine the nature of the capitalist system. This particular example is the result of the classical dichotomy and the dialectic tension between capital and work. What does the idea of the university mean today? In short, it is not a pursuit of totality and universality (*universitas*) or indeed of *Bildung* (the Croatian term *sveučilište* = a place where "everything (*sve*) is studied (*učiti*)"), but boils down studying in a reductionist and partial way to "skills-oriented education".

What type of hegemony – which establishes the framework for the emergence and implementation of the Bologna education reform project – is this? Generally speaking, all the mentioned trends have shaped and perpetuated the dominant hegemony of the political and economic paradigm of neoliberalism.[4] The characteristics of the period that started in the 1970s, but still crucially determines the dominant economic, political, social and cultural patterns of our time, can be reduced to several parameters:

a) corporate business and economic matrix of the market and financialized capital, with the logic of profit and so-called growth at any cost, prevails over political and social action and the idea of the public good. To paraphrase Greek economist Janis Varoufakis (2015), we transformed from traditional societies with markets to market societies, which is evidently inscribed in the heritage of the theory of the great transformation by Karl Polany (1999);

b) decrease of power, autonomy and influence of the classically-understood institution of the state with its accompanying administration, bureaucracy, repressive and culturally-hegemonic apparatuses;

[4] The political and economic doctrine of neoliberalism had its (re)affirmation in the 1970s and 1980s in the policies of Ronald Reagan in the USA and Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain, as well as through direct economic and social experiments in a number of South American countries, particularly Chile, conducted by economists of the so-called Chicago school headed by Milton Friedman (more on this in Klein 2008). Neoliberalism is based on three basic principles that share the common idea of a "weak state": legislative deregulation (so as to remove any administrative and bureaucratic obstacles and lead to facilitating business initiatives), general privatization (not only of publicly owned manufacturing and industry, but also of services of public importance, such as education and healthcare, and of natural resources such as water and forests), and maximal reduction of all public expenses. The central participants in the realization of this model are global megacorporations, financial centers of power such as investment and speculative banks, so-called *hedge* funds, credit rating agencies and transnational institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (for more on the political, economic and social model of neoliberalism cf. Harvey 2013).

c) expansion of the techno-management production culture and acceleration of processes of commodification, reification and cooptation;

d) organizational and functional transformation of traditional public social institutions (e.g. educational and healthcare institutions), retirement institutions, universities or the media;

e) expansion of a spirit of anti-intellectualism and the related economy of spectacularization of society within the framework of postmodern culture.

In relation to this, there appeared a neo-positivist paradigm of instrumentalizing and functionalizing of the science and education system, which, rather than offering a vision of building the entire personality through education, offers a reductionist model of operational and technological knowledge that should follow the demands of the market, which is incompatible with the profile of the social sciences and the humanities, and is adapted to the natural sciences and technical disciplines. Such trends were, incidentally, visible as early as the mid-1970s, when Bowles and Gintis wrote their classical study *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976).

If we focus on one of the basic interests of the humanities themselves, then the function of language, i.e. hegemonic discourse, becomes particularly important in this context. The importance of language/discourse increases if we take into consideration the concept about the performative[5] figure of the public intellectual, which we will turn to in the following section. For now, it will suffice to examine which ideological mechanisms occur in the production of hegemonic meaning paradigms, and this is best seen on the symbolic level from a short examination of the contemporary austerity measures discourse. This discourse manifests itself in the increased production, particularly media production, of a specific type of so-called "crisis" signifiers and narratives including expressions such as *painful cuts*, *belt tightening*, the supposed need to go on various social *diets*, *passage through the valley of tears*, etc., as well as similar expressions such as "favorable or unfavorable business *climate*", and "*weathering the perfect storm* of crisis", which in the end results in an ideological and hegemonic perpetuation of the political economy of capitalism and its power. We find the confirmation of the validity of this approach in the specificity, or rather the apparent self-explanatory nature of an expression that, over the past few decades, became the marker of the neoliberal doctrine in language: "There's no such thing as a free lunch".[6] This is a discourse which, in Orwellian terms, is a type of *newspeak*; in other words, these are ideologically fabricated *naturalist discursive formations* which use the seemingly benign metaphoricity of language to create the illusion

[5] Performative, which refers to the figure of the public intellectual, may be connected with the sociolinguistic context here, i.e. with the way in which Austin (1962) sees optimum efficiency, i.e. the effectiveness of language. This is a performative function of language, a puppet-like spoken realization resulting from the symbolic embodiment of representative institutions by the so-called performative subject established through the very linguistic expression, or through confering the institutional seal (judges, kings, presidents, etc.).

[6] This expression is also the title of the book *There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch* (first published in 1975) by the most famous neoliberal economist, Nobel-prize winner Milton Friedman.

of non-ideology, and, moreover, *naturalness* of the crisis and its economic, political and social effects.[7]

Before we turn to the main thrust of the paper – current processes of transformation of the public intellectual today – we should, at least briefly, discuss the problem of the Bologna system of higher education as part of the contemporary hegemony in the context of the so-called transition, as seen in the post-Yugoslav area at least since the 1980s. The so-called transition is a permanent – never complete, but supposedly transitional – phase of constant transformation and adaptation to relatively new geopolitical, economic and social conditions determined and dictated by the capitalist regime. According to Boris Buden, "in 1989 the democratic revolution was transformed into the so-called transition to democracy, into the process of transition. What had once been an act of liberation, an act of freedom, now became a long process of adaptation" (Pupovac, 2014). We argue that the concept of transition nearly always calls for the use of the adjective so-called, as a way to point to the potential ambivalence and, above all, ideology (or even teleology!) of the term and the wide range of meanings it produces. Conceived in this way, the concept of transition is an ideologeme, a master-signifier, to use the discourse of psychoanalysis. In this example, what traditional Marxism refers to as "the work of the concept" is at play. We are interested, then, in the so-called transition in the context of ideology and politicality, beyond the mere self-explanatory nature of the concept and its meaning. If we accept the treatment of the so-called transition as an ideologeme with its ascribed ideological practices, i.e. if we go beyond the widely-accepted interpretations of the concept invoking liberal and conservative "transitology"[8] theorists, we must ask ourselves what ideological practices are at work in the so-called transition? What is the gist of the basic function of the so-called transition as an ideologeme? Or, more specifically, what does the term transition designate or stand for?

[7] For more on critical analysis of the discourse of austerity measures in the context of the existing neoliberal hegemony cf. Hromadžić (2015b).

[8] This refers to authors such as Rustow, O'Donnell, Schmitter, Huntington, etc. They believe that the term transition, almost in terms of evolutionary determinism and seeing history as linear progression, refers to trends whereby one social state is transformed into another, from autocratic and totalitarian to consolidated democratic regimes of parliamentary politics characterized by a multi-party system, supposed economic stability and the promise of prosperity, cultural liberalization and the like. According to these approaches, transition is a milestone on the way to a fulfilled world of capitalist liberal democracy which, from a self-satisfied and self-sufficient perspective, speaks from the edges of history and ideology. According to Romanian Marxist theoretician Ovidiu Tichindeleanu "Transition is the paradigmatic concept of the cultural and social postcommunist spheres that announces the rite of passage of the former socialist countries, allegedly, from madness to normality, from totalitarianism to democracy, from planned economy to free market economy" (2007: 20). More nuanced views will show that the rhetoric of the so-called transition is always a hegemonic discourse in line with "the zeitgeist". This, for instance, includes the adage about the "inevitability and necessity of transition processes". On the other hand, there are numerous criticisms of "transitology" which problematize the described ideology of linear evolution from socialism into capitalism. Critiques such as those by Creed (1998), Burrawoy and Verdery (1999) or Humphrey (1999) offer a more complex, nonlinear image of the transformation of economic and political systems and everyday life, where the characteristics of socialism and capitalism overlap in time and experience, and what dominates are various "local" experiences of the so-called transition.

These questions and contexts necessarily lead to the need to understand, interpret and position the so-called transition in relation to the mentioned hegemony phenomena in the processes of the restoration of liberal capitalism, i.e. in relation to the values characteristic of this system, including: appropriation and perpetuation of capital, privatization processes in the transition, increasing commercialization and commodification of public life (including public goods, healthcare, education and the like), neo-colonial and auto-colonial trends, social pauperization at the (semi)periphery, etc. This is a notion whose basic ideological function is in fact to conceal, or to refer to the contradictions and antagonisms in the very foundation of neoliberal capitalism. According to Horvat and Štiks, who write about "the notion of an incomplete transition", there are two main reasons for this rhetoric: "avoidance of a full confrontation with the consequences of Transition, and preservation of the discourse and relations of dominance vis-à-vis the former socialist states. Therefore, one of the basic assumptions of eternal transition is the 'need' for tutelage and supervision" (2011: 3).

In short, we are witnessing a social consensus shaped by a non-critical view and interpretation of the so-called transition, which results in the concepts concerning the real character of social processes being reduced, semantically inconsistent, and not reflected upon, which produces the effect of meaning without understanding, i.e. complete self-explanatoriness. Therefore, we need to try to view the so-called transition parallactically, i.e. from a somewhat askew angle. In this light, the so-called transition is a permanent, never complete and supposedly continually deficient process of eternal "adaptation" of marginalized areas, such as the post-Yugoslav area, to the new geopolitical and economic parameters of hegemonic capitalist regimes in the late 20th and the 21st century.

## TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE FIGURE OF THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL TODAY

Let us now leave the issues of the crisis of the humanities and social sciences in the context of the Bologna system of education and the type of hegemony in the period of the so-called transition, and proceed to the central problem of the article, described in the introduction as the issue of the position and function of the public intellectual. We consider the public intellectual as the traditional central figure of engaged humanities and social sciences, particularly focusing on the critical ideological episodes of a period, which can be inferred from the role and the symbolic meaning of this performative figure. The figure of the public intellectual has been consensually elevated nearly to mythical heights by the well-known canonical gesture of French writer Émil Zola in the so-called Dreyfus affair at the end of the 19th century,[9] and was later applied to a number of participants

[9] The affair started in 1894 in France. An officer of the French army of Jewish origin, Alfred Dreyfus, was wrongfully accused, and then convicted for alleged espionage for Germany in a court martial proceed-

in the worldwide intellectual and activist scene during much of the 20th century, with special emphasis on the so-called New Left and their engagement in the turbulent and inspirational 1960s.[10] However, according to many, this is an irretrievable thing of the past. At least, this has been the view in the last several decades.[11]

On the very basic level of interpretation of this problem motif, it is necessary to avoid any glorification of the often self-satisfied view of the western European bourgeois intellectual –usually presented in textbook and popular narratives by invoking several prominent intellectuals of the "French school", active from the end of the Second World War to the fall of the Berlin wall – as well as moralizing laments regarding his/her irretrievable demise. It is more productive to relate the obvious crisis of engaged public intellectual thought and action to the increasingly apparent and ever more aggressive economic, political and media attacks on the humanities and critical theories of society; to relate it to the dominant hegemonic (liberal market) views of the present function and role of knowledge; to relate it to neoliberal capitalism (in the political and economic as well as the cultural and consumerist sense); and to relate it to the corpus of media-constructed images about all this, which are the product of a spectacularized image of the world. Such a situation at structural levels of social reality results in, among other things, not attaching central social importance to the traditional figure of the public intellectual. Simultaneously, the public intellectual's desire and willingness to take part in public action, as noticed by Nico Carpentier, is itself undergoing a crisis, which Carpentier defines on three levels: the economic crisis, the crisis of representative democracy and the crisis of *mimesis*, i.e.

ing. The process, which had recognizable anti-Semitic characteristics, sparked great public interest and uproar. Émil Zola, on request of Dreyfus' lawyer, became actively involved in the process, sending, among other things, a sharp public protest letter to the then president of France, entitled *J'accuse!* (I accuse!), which, it is believed, played a crucial role in restarting the investigation, and eventually dropping all charges against Dreyfus. In the end, Dreyfus was acquitted in 1900, and Zola's engagement in the affair outlined the contours of the classical publicly engaged intellectual who has the courage, knowledge and power to face socially relevant problems and talk about them. One of the recent studies that reaffirms the "Dreyfus Affair" from the historical and cultural perspective, and which can be interpreted in the context of more recent social and political disputes that France and the world are facing today, is Tom Conner's 2014 book *The Dreyfus Affair and the Rise of the French Public Intellectual.*

[10] The concept of the New Left refers to an entire array of politically leftist neo-Marxist movements and initiatives created in the so-called Western countries during the 1960s and 1970s, as a reaction to the political failures of communist and socialist parties in western European countries and in North America, and their alleged inability to rise to the challenges facing the world of the second half of the last century, including the issues of gender, racial, ethic, alternative culture etc. minorities and identities.

[11] In an attempt to understand the transformed world, and the role and significance of the intellectual in the world of the second half of the 20th century, it is useful to remember the discussion between French philosophers Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, held in 1972. In the debate, which dealt with the wider issues of the relationship between theory, practice and power, and which touched upon the problems of class struggle and identities, the issue of the place of the intellectual was also touched upon. The opinion that prevailed was that the role of the intellectual is no longer to place himself/herself to the side or "above" the situation in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity, but rather to actively struggle against the forms of power that transform him/her into an object and instrument in the spheres of knowledge, truth, consciousness and discourse (more on this can be found at the following link: https://libcom.org/library/intellectuals-power-a-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze).

investigating how the intellectual's rhetoric can be transformed into counter-hegemonic discourse (Carpentier 2014).

The main thrust of this part of the text is that the figure of the public intellectual – although generally primarily defined by ideal-type value features that the humanities and social sciences also evoke (e.g. his/her public engagement, argumentative criticism, unquestionable ethics and professionalism, moral integrity, courage and determination to address issues and problems of wider social importance publicly and clearly regardless of possible consequences) – should primarily be observed and analyzed as part of the period when narratives about the public intellectual are articulated and presented. In other words, the dominant performative figure of the public intellectual at a particular space and time is a reflection of the period itself, one of its mirror images. This is why the perception of the public intellectual icon of a time will vary depending on whether we are talking about high modernist bourgeois society, the so-called social welfare state in the period of compromise capitalism (referred to as "capitalism with a human face"), the utopian experiment of social emancipation in nominally socialist statehood projects or the neo-capitalist restoration and modification of the state and society according to the principles of the supremacy of liberal market and profit-oriented values. Given what has been said, Zola's public letter to the then president of France, as well as the engagement of more recent public intellectual figures such as Sartre, Habermas, Foucault or Bourdieu, would be unlikely to play a great part or be of significance in the conditions of today's world. On the contrary, their classical gesture of activist intellectual engagement would more likely result in a grotesquely counterproductive effect.

All this was already clear when Russell Jacoby (1987) wrote his famous study about the last intellectuals. Focusing on the problems of intellectual defeatism and evident spread of anti-intellectualism in the USA since the 1970s, as obvious from the fact that, after the middle of the century, no new public intellectual figures of the likes of Edmund Wilson, Lewis Mumford or John Kenneth Galbraith appeared, Jacoby touches upon the significant aspects of contemporary cooptation of publicly expressed critical and activist intellectual voices formed during the social revolutions of the 1960s, done under the auspices of academic security, and its simultaneous futility with the increase of academic careerism. Only a bit over ten years ago, Bryan Turner held a lecture at the London School of Economics, which caused attention and sparked debate. Later publishing it in article form, Turner frames the issue of evident decrease of social importance of public intellectuals in the wider context of public intellectual life in Great Britain after the Second World War, which he sees as characterized by imperial decline, a deterioration of British sociology, or, more specifically, its incapability to provide an appropriate explanation of the fall of the empire, and development of consumerist society in the second half of the 20th century (Turner 2006). In a critical review of Turner's claims, Philippe Fontaine lists several reasons for the incapability or lack of interest of the British postwar sociology to provide a macro-systemic explanation of the causes for the downfall of the British Empire. According to Fontaine, these reasons include the actions of the so-called think-tanks such as the British

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), known, among other things, for its important influence on shaping Margaret Thatcher's economic and social policies, turning the public opinion towards 'capitalism', as well as postwar trends of increased academic specialization in British universities, led by the belief that the problems of the British society can be solved based on the model of the 'invisible hand of the market' (Fontaine 2006: 192).

Because of such decade-long trends, the former academic as well as activist public engagement which used to be holistic, symptomatically, started to cocoon into narrow clusters of their own professional expertise and corresponding closed contours of thought. This is the juncture where we should remember the classical reference that refers to the conditions and possibilities of attaining what Gramsci calls organic intellectuals within socialist hegemony, which is also the eternal challenge for true emancipation of the world (more on this in Gramsci 1973). For instance, in socialist Yugoslavia this place was held, at least in relation to nominally constructing the dominant ideological paradigm of self-management socialism, by the figure of a public worker in culture, at the university or in the media.

At the meeting place of the dominant paradigms of the period – neoliberalism in the political and economic sense, financial speculative capitalism as a devastating business pattern replacing the socially inclusive model of industrial production in the so-called West, and postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism – in the last three or four decades preconditions were created for more significant transformations of the character, place and role of the public intellectual in social life. In this sense, the interaction of historical, economic, political and cultural forces in the last three decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century can be observed through the transformation of the nature of the hegemony of transition on the example of the performative figure of the public intellectual – from a classical publicly engaged intellectual towards a technocratic managerial project expert. Some of the main characteristics of the former have already been mentioned, but what are the characteristics of the latter?

The technocratic project expert, or to use Lewis Gordon's (2013) term, a member "of the academic managerial class", as the very expression suggests, looms large on the technocratic horizon as a set of beliefs about the need for an expert solution to social problems; a solution which, supposedly, has no ideological burden, and is therefore, at least according to its own ascribed knowledge about what specifically needs to be done, completely objective. The price paid, from the perspective of technocracy, is a real bargain: it is the social, political, economic and cultural decontextualization of what needs to be contextualized! At the same time, the technocratic project expert is burdened by the requirements of neopositivism, i.e. administrative and project quantification of his/her own results through continual statistical scientometrics, which is symbolically relatable to the assessments that the credit rating agencies give to market competitors, and is complementary in spirit to the character of recent neocapitalism. Such a matrix, of course, is not new or unknown, it has been cautioned against by the authors belonging to the critical theory of society of the Frankfurt School. Thus, Jürgen Habermas (1986) wrote about

the technocratic consciousness, and Herbert Marcuse (1989) about the one-dimensional man. Therefore, it is completely understandable that the academic manager, the science-project expert, represents the ideal promotional figure, a symptomatic pimple on the body of the neoliberal machine, a working figure–substitute to the archaic character of the publicly engaged intellectual in a world that is frequently referred to as post-ideological, thus producing an ideological gesture *par excellence*. Of course, this dichotomy (classical public intellectual vs. technocratic project expert) can be expanded by some other models that appear on the horizon of contemporary hegemony.[12]

Thus, we come to the question of what are the typical social effects which result from the confrontation of the three typical figures (that we merely outlined): the classical public intellectual, the technocratic managerial project expert and the pundit/participant in media spectacles? The image of the first one is defined by the social effect of the mentioned parallax (the skewed view of reality), and the second one can be recognized in the reflection of a concave mirror, a hyperbolic embodiment of selfness, a body that, in Bakhtinian and Rabelaisian terms, swallows the world, and the world swallows it. The third one represents the classical effect of a realized media simulacrum, i.e. a series of productions of successive signifiers with no reference to the signified. To end with a metaphor, we could conclude that the two latter figures (at that historical point where the contour and function of the first figure disappears) are reduced to confused but effective interweaving, and symbolize the image and matrix of functioning of a contemporary Moloch: a (self-) destructive system/machine that, in order to survive, is willing to devour the entire world.

## A CONCLUDING NOTE

What could, then, be an appropriate answer to this diagnosis "of the state of things", and a possible guidepost to the humanities and social sciences if they want to be emancipatory and progressive in today's world? It is certainly not an attempt to restore the role of the public intellectual who would speak out in the spirit "of my small bourgeois 'I'", from the position of the still relatively well established areas (e.g. academic or artistic fields) in the existing decaying system. Also, as recently shown by Randall Collins in his extensive analysis of the connection between intellectualism and professional politics in the historical perspective entitled "Who has been a successful public intellectual?", leading intellectuals have not been successful in politics, and politicians have never been reputable intellectuals (Collins 2011). Appropriate answers to these challenges perhaps require a

[12] For instance, on the horizon of produced social reality, several decades ago there appeared an entity that we may refer to as a pundit/participant in the media spectacle of the cultural industry in the postmodernist era, such as, for instance, the television game show quiz. This pundit is most commonly a pauperized member of the lumpenproletariat devoid of a class consciousness, who is exposed to media and marketing constructed varieties of social competitiveness and exploitation of the self in return for pseudo-participation and quasi-affirmation.

return to and appropriate reaffirmation of the spheres of what Marx refers to as "a general mind" (1979), or to what Rancière calls "common intelligence" (Pulig 2015), a capacity of sharing values that originate from anyone. The reaffirmation of these ideas necessarily includes some form of healthy politicization of an individual in the collective through social engagement and activism, outside the spheres of established professional politics of a capitalist parliamentary democracy.

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## HUMANISTIKA I DRUŠTVENE ZNANOSTI U VRTLOGU HEGEMONIJE TZV. TRANZICIJE: PERFORMATIVNOST JAVNOG INTELEKTUALCA DANAS

U članku se otvara nekoliko problemskih cjelina u obliku strukturnih pitanja posvećenih današnjoj društvenoj poziciji humanistike i društvenih znanosti, naravi hegemonije našeg vremena te aktualnim artikulacijama kritičkog mišljenja. Radi se, u prvome planu, o problemima sustava visokog obrazovanja uslijed Bolonjskog procesa te društvenoj ulozi i važnosti figure javnog intelektualca danas, dok se na sekundarnoj razini članka ta mjesta povezuju s karakteristikama aktualne hegemonije i s tzv. tranzicijom. U tekstu se zagovara teza da je javnog intelektualca potrebno sagledati i analizirati kao performativni lik epohe unutar koje se narativi o javnom intelektualcu artikuliraju i prezentiraju, odnosno da je on slika i prilika same te epohe, jedan od njezinih zrcalnih odraza.

Ključne riječi: bolonjska reforma visokog obrazovanja, hegemonija, tzv. tranzicija, javni intelektualac